

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

HUMAN EVOLUTION

Howell, F. Clark and Bourlière, François (Editors). *African Ecology and Human Evolution*. (Wenner-Gren Foundation symposium). London, 1964. Methuen, Pp. viii + 666. Price 84s.

Washburn, Sherwood, L. (Editor). *Classification and Human Evolution*. (Wenner-Gren Foundation symposium). London, 1964. Methuen. Pp. viii + 371. Price 63s.

THESE IMPORTANT BOOKS are the result of two separate symposia of specialists who met at Burg Wartenstein, the European conference centre of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Both works live up to the high standard already set by previous volumes in this series, and I predict that they will be very useful reference works for many years to come. The marked difference in price is due, no doubt, to the size difference, which in turn was dictated to some degree by the fact that in the ecology volume there is an additional hundred pages of discussion. I must admit that this appeared to me to be a long-drawn-out extravagance, and certainly the other monograph is just as useful without it.

In view of the obvious importance of Africa in hominid evolution, and the vast amount of Pleistocene information which is flooding from this continent, it is very satisfactory to have, considered within the same cover, Pleistocene stratigraphy, climatic changes, faunal and floral variations, and early hominids and their cultural associations. For good measure are also chapters on baboon and gorilla ecology—in so far as such studies can help in understanding human evolution. The work is very well endowed with tables and maps, but few illustrations are included—which is a pity as they could have been put to good use in parts.

As the title of the second monograph implies, it is specifically concerned with problems of classifying. At first sight, the subject may appear somewhat dry and narrow in scope, but the breadth of the papers demonstrates nicely how varied is the evidence which must be considered if hominid taxonomic relationships are ever to

be resolved with general agreement. Included in this study are contributions on taxonomic "theory"; age, sex and variability in primates; skull, hands and feet in primates; the status of *Oreopithecus*; hominid locomotor functions; behaviour; hominoid chromosomes; and biochemical problems. On the whole I found this a more compact and readable work than the ecology monograph. Both, however, will certainly become established reference works.

DON BROTHWELL

GENETICS

Meier, Hans. *Experimental Pharmacogenetics: Physiopathology of Heredity and Pharmacological Responses*. New York and London, 1963. Academic Press. Pp. xi + 213. Price 60s.

EXAMPLES OF GENETICALLY controlled differences between animals in response to drugs have been known for many years. Recently, interest in these phenomena has considerably increased, and the name "Pharmacogenetics" has been coined for this field. Within the last year or so, several symposia on pharmacogenetics have been held, and there have been several books. The volume under review, though it comes from the Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor, Maine, U.S.A., deals by no means only with the mouse, but includes a good deal of information on rats, hamsters, rabbits, guinea pigs, dogs and cats. As the author says in the preface, "... this monograph, while primarily addressing itself to research workers in pharmacology and genetics, may be of interest to investigators of problems in physiology, pathology, and biochemistry as well. In fact, because of the complexity of the subject, it has been necessary to assume on the part of the reader considerable familiarity with all of these disciplines. It is hoped, however, that this will not discourage those whose backgrounds in any of these areas are minimal." The reviewer, who cannot claim considerable familiarity with all of these disciplines, has found the book heavy going, not least because of the condensed style of writing and the amount of disconnected factual